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THE IRISH WOLF-DOG.

The greyhound ! the great hound ! the graceful of limb !
Rough fellow ! tall fellow ! swift fellow, and slim !
Let them sound through the earth, let them sail o'er the sea,
They will light on none other more ancient than thee !

OLD MS.

No individual of the canine race has attained an equal amount of fame, or excited an equal degree of attention through Europe, not merely in the days of his acknowledged existence amongst our dogs of chase, but even now, that he is considered to be extinct, with that once possessed by the superb creature whose picture adorns our title-page, and an account of whom forms the subject of the present article. Public opinion has long been divided respecting the precise appearance and form of this majestic animal, and so many different ideas have been conceived of him, that many persons have been induced to come to the conclusion that no particular breed of dogs was ever kept for wolf-hunting in this country, but that the appellation of "wolf-dog" was bestowed upon any dog swift enough to overtake and powerful enough to contend

with and overcome that formidable animal. There are those who hold this opinion, and there are likewise those who hold that while a particular breed was used, it was a sort of heavy mastiff-like dog, now extinct. It is the object of the present paper to show that not only did Ireland possess a peculiar race of dogs exclusively devoted to wolf-hunting, but that those dogs, instead of being of the mastiff kind, resembled the greyhound in form ; and instead of being extinct, are still to be met with, although we are compelled to acknowledge that they are very scarce. I myself was once in very gross error respecting this dog, for I like many others conceived him to have been a mastiff, and implicitly believed that the dogs of Lord Altamont, described in the 3d vol. of the Linnæan Transactions by Mr Lambert, were the sole surviving representatives of the Irish wolf-dog. An able and talented paper, read by Mr A. Haffield of this city, about a year ago, before the Dublin Natural History Society, served to stagger me in my belief, and subsequent careful inquiry and research have completed my conversion. I proceed to lay before my readers the

result of that inquiry, and I feel confident that no individual after reading the evidences which I shall adduce, will continue to harbour a doubt respecting the true appearance and form of the ancient Irish wolf-dog.

We are informed by such disjointed scraps of Celtic verse as Time, that merciless destroyer, has suffered to come down, though in a mutilated form, to our days, that in the times of old, when Fionn Mac Cumhaill, popularly styled Fin Mac Cool, wielded the sceptre of power and of justice, we possessed a prodigious and courageous dog used for hunting the deer and the wild boar, with, though last not least, the grim and savage wolf which ravaged the folds and slaughtered the herds of our ancestors. We learn from the same source that these dogs were also frequently employed as auxiliaries in war, and that they were "mighty in combat, their breasts like plates of brass, and greatly to be feared." We might adduce the songs of Ossian, but that we fear to draw upon ourselves the envious rancour of some snarling critic. We cannot, however, avoid observing, that the epithets "hairy-footed," "white-breasted," and "bounding," are singularly characteristic of some of the striking peculiarities of the dog in question, and strangely coincide with the descriptions furnished by other writers respecting him; so that M^r Pherson must at all events have been at the pains of considerable research if he actually forged the beautiful poems which he put forth to the world under Ossian's name. The word "Bran," the name given to Fingal's noble hound, employed by others than Ossian, or I should not mention it, is Celtic, and signifies "mountain torrent," implying that impetuosity of course and headlong courage so characteristic of the subject of my paper. I have said that many assert the Irish wolf-dog to be no longer in existence. I have ventured a denial of this, and refer to the wolf-dog or deer-dog of the Highlands of Scotland as his actual and faithful living representative. Perhaps I am wrong in saying "representative." I hold that the Irish wolf-dog and the Highland deer-dog are one and the same; and I now proceed to cite a few authorities in support of my positions.

The venerable Bede, as well as the Scotch historian John Major, informs us that Scotland was originally peopled from Ireland under the conduct of Reuda, and adds, that even in his own days half Scotland spoke the Irish language as their mother tongue; and many of my readers are doubtless aware that even at this present time the Gaelic and the Erse are so much alike that a Connaught man finds no difficulty in comprehending and conversing with a Highlander, and I myself have read the Gaelic Bible with an Irish dictionary. Scotland also was called by the early writers Scotia Minor, and Ireland Scotia Major. The colonization, therefore, of Scotland from Ireland, admits of little doubt. As the Irish wolf-dog was at that time in the enjoyment of his most extended fame, it was not to be expected that the colonists would omit taking with them such a fine description of dog, and which would prove so useful to them in a newly established settlement, and that too at a period when hunting was not merely an amusement, but one of their main occupations, and their main source of subsistence. The Irish wolf-dog was thus carried into Scotland and became the Highland or Scottish wolf-dog, changing in process of time his name with his country; and in the course of ages when the wolves died out of the land, his occupation being no longer the hunting of those animals but of deer, he became known no longer as the Highland wolf-dog, but as the Highland deer-dog, though indeed he is to the present called by the former of these appellations by many writers both Irish and Scottish. In Ireland the wolves were in existence longer than in Scotland; but as soon as the wolves ceased to exist in this country, the dogs were suffered to become extinct also, while in Scotland there was still abundant employment for them after the days of wolf-hunting were over, for the deer still remained; and useful as they had been as wolf-dogs, they proved themselves if possible more so as deer-hounds. That the Irish wolf-dog was a tall rough greyhound, similar in every respect to the Highland dog of the present day, I beg to adduce in proof the following authorities:—Strabo mentions a tall greyhound in use among the Pictish and Celtic nations, which he states was held in high esteem by our ancestors, and was even imported into Gaul for the purposes of the chase. Campton expressly speaks of the Irish wolf-dog as a "greyhound of great bone and limb." Silaus calls it also a greyhound, and asserts that it was imported into Ireland by the Belgæ, and is the same with the renowned Belgic dog of antiquity, and that it was, during the days of Roman grandeur, brought to Rome for the combats of the amphitheatre.

Pliny relates a combat in which the Irish wolf-dogs took a part; he calls them "Canes Graii Hibernici," and describes them as much taller than the mastiff. Hollinshed, in speaking of the Irish, says, "They are not without wolves, and greyhounds to hunt them." Evelyn, speaking of the bear-garden, says, "The bull-dogs did exceeding well, but the Irish wolf-dog exceeded, which was a tall greyhound, a stately creature, and beat a cruel mastiff."

Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, was presented by King John with a specimen of this kind of dog, "the greyhound, the greathound, the graceful of limb;" and most of my readers are familiar with that beautiful poem, the "Grave of the Greyhound." These animals were in those days permitted to be kept only by princes and chiefs; and in the Welch laws of the ninth century we find heavy penalties laid down for the maiming or injuring of the Irish greyhound, or, as it was styled in the code alluded to, "Canis Graius Hibernicus;" and a value was set upon them, equal to more than double that set on the ordinary greyhound.

Moryson, secretary to Lord Deputy Mountjoy, says, "The Irish men and greyhounds are of great stature." Lombard says that the finest hunting dogs in Europe were produced in Ireland: "Greyhounds useful to take the stag, wild boar, or wolf." Pennant describes these dogs as scarce, and as being led to the chase in leather slips or thongs, and calls them the "Irish greyhound." Ray describes him as the "greatest dog" he had ever seen. Buffon says he saw an "Irish greyhound" which measured five feet in height when in a sitting posture, and says that all other sorts of greyhounds are descended from him, and that in Scotland it is called the *Highland greyhound*, that it is very large, deep chested, and covered with long rough hair.

Scottish noblemen were not always content with such specimens of this dog as their own country produced, but frequently sent for them to Ireland, conceiving doubtless that they would be found better and purer in their native land. The following is a copy of a letter addressed by Deputy Falkland to the Earl of Cork in 1623:—

"MY LORD,

I have lately received letters from my Lord Duke of Buccleuch and others of my noble friends, who have entreated me to send them some greyhound dogs and bitches out of this kingdom, of the largest sort, which I perceive they intend to present unto divers princes and other noble persons; and if you can possibly, let them be white, which is the colour most in request here. Expecting your answer by the bearer, I commit you to the protection of the Almighty, and am

Your lordship's attached friend,

FALKLAND."

Smith, in the second edition of his *History of Waterford*, says, "The Irish greyhound is nearly extinct; it is much taller than a mastiff, but more like a greyhound, and for size, strength, and shape, cannot be equalled. Roderick, King of Connaught, was obliged to furnish hawks and greyhounds to Henry II. Sir Thomas Rue obtained great favour from the Great Mogul in 1615 for a brace of Irish greyhounds presented by him. Henry VIII. presented the Marquis of Dessarages, a Spanish grandee, with two goshawks and four Irish greyhounds."

I have now adduced, I think, a sufficient number of authorities to demonstrate the identity of the Irish wolf-dog with the Highland deer-hound. I might adduce many more, but want of space prevents my doing so. I may however, ere concluding, take the liberty of extracting from the excellent paper of Mr Haffield, already alluded to as having been read before the Dublin Natural History Society, the following communication, received by that gentleman from Sir William Betham, Ulster King at Arms, an authority of very high importance on any subject connected with Irish antiquities. Sir William says:—"From the mention of the wolf-dogs in the old Irish poems and stories, and also from what I have heard from a very old person, long since dead, of his having seen them at the Neale, in the county of Mayo, the seat of Sir John Browne, ancestor to Lord Kilmaine, I have no doubt they were a gigantic greyhound. My departed friend described them as being very gentle, and that Sir J. Browne allowed them to come into his dining-room, where they put their heads over the shoulders of those who sat at table; they were not smooth-skinned like our greyhounds, but rough and curly-haired. The Irish poets call the wolf-dog 'Cu,' and the common hound 'Gayer,' a marked distinction, the word 'Cu' signifying a champion."

The Highland or Irish wolf-dog is a stately majestic animal,

extremely good tempered and quiet in his disposition unless when irritated or excited, when he becomes furious, and is, in consequence of his tremendous strength, a truly formidable animal. The size of these dogs has been much exaggerated. Goldsmith asserts that he saw several, some of which were four feet high! We cannot of course credit this, but there is no doubt that they were larger than most other dogs, and indeed the Highland deer-hound is now the tallest dog in existence.

This animal is nearly extinct. Even Glengarry, whose dogs were once so famous, has not one genuine specimen left, and but a few remain scattered here and there through the north of Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. Mr Nolan's dog "Oscar," whose portrait heads this article, is the finest specimen of the kind I have ever seen, standing 28½ inches in height at the shoulders; their average height in their very best days seems to have been about 30 inches. The colour of these dogs varies, but the most esteemed are dark iron-grey, with white breast. This is the colour of Oscar. They are, however, to be found of a yellowish or sandy hue, brindled, and even white. In former times, as will be seen from Lord Falkland's letter quoted above, this latter colour was by many preferred. One of the most remarkable facts respecting the size of this dog, is the great disparity which exists between the sizes of the male and female of the breed, many of the latter being very diminutive, while their male offspring invariably attain the full stature of its race. Why will not some of our Irish gentlemen and sportsmen turn their attention to this splendid breed of dogs, and seek to prevent, ere it be too late, its total extirpation?

Now, readers, there may be some among you who have thought my paper somewhat dry and prosy; and in case you should forget the many times I have amused you before, and cast me forth altogether from your good graces, I shall conclude with an authentic statement of how the last wolves existing in the county Tyrone were destroyed by means of the Irish greyhound; my account is taken from a biography of a Tyrone family published in Belfast in 1829. I thus venture to abridge the note to page 74.

In the mountainous parts of the county Tyrone the inhabitants suffered much from the wolves, and gave from the public fund as much for the head of one of these animals as they would now give for the capture of a notorious robber on the highway. There lived in those days an adventurer, who, alone and unassisted, made it his occupation to destroy these ravagers. The time for attacking them was in the night, and midnight was the best time for doing so, as that was their wonted time for leaving their lair in search of food, when the country was at rest and all was still; then issuing forth, they fell on their defenceless prey, and the carnage commenced. There was a species of dog for the purpose of hunting them, called the wolf-dog; the animal resembled a rough, stout, half-bred greyhound, but was much stronger. In the county Tyrone there was then a large space of ground inclosed by a high stone wall, having a gap at each of the two opposite extremities, and in this were secured the flocks of the surrounding farmers. Still, secure though this fold was deemed, it was entered by the wolves, and its inmates slaughtered. The neighbouring proprietors having heard of the noted wolf-hunter above mentioned, by name Rory Carragh, sent for him, and offered the usual reward, with some addition, if he would undertake to destroy the two remaining wolves that had committed such devastation. Carragh undertaking the task, took with him two wolf-dogs, and a little boy only twelve years old, the only person who would accompany him, and repaired at the approach of midnight to the fold in question. "Now," said Carragh to the boy, "as the two wolves usually enter the opposite extremities of the sheep-fold at the same time, I must leave you and one of the dogs to guard this one while I go to the other. He steals with all the caution of a cat, nor will you hear him, but the dog will, and positively will give him the first fall; if, therefore, you are not active when he is down to rivet his neck to the ground with this spear, he will rise up and kill both you and the dog. So good night."

"I'll do what I can," said the little boy, as he took the spear from the wolf-hunter's hand.

The boy immediately threw open the gate of the fold, and took his seat in the inner part, close to the entrance; his faithful companion crouching at his side, and seeming perfectly aware of the dangerous business he was engaged in. The night was very dark and cold, and the poor little boy being

benumbed with the chilly air, was beginning to fall into a kind of sleep, when at that instant the dog with a roar leaped across him, and laid his mortal enemy upon the earth. The boy was roused into double activity by the voice of his companion, and drove the spear through the wolf's neck as he had been directed, at which time Carragh appeared, bearing the head of the other.

I have not been able to ascertain with certainty the date of the death of the last Irish wolf, but there was a presentment for killing wolves granted in Cork in the year 1710. I am at present acquainted with an old gentleman between 80 and 90 years of age, whose mother remembered wolves to have been killed in the county of Wexford about the year 1730-40; and it is asserted by many persons of weight and veracity that a wolf was killed in the Wicklow mountains so recently as 1770. I have other legends on the subject of wolf-hunting in Ireland in former times, but want of space compels me, for the present at all events, to conclude, which I do, trusting that what I have already written will gratify my readers.

An ancient Irish harp, popularly known as the harp of Brian Boriumha, still preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, is ornamented with a figure of the wolf-dog, which, as representing him under the form of a rough strong greyhound, precisely similar to the animal now known as the Highland deer-hound, furnishes an additional argument to the correctness of the position above advanced. H. D. R.

MOSAIC WORK.—The art of mosaic work has been known in Rome since the days of the republic. The severer rulers of that period forbade the introduction of foreign marbles, and the republican mosaics are all in black and white. Under the empire the art was greatly improved, and not merely by the introduction of marbles of various colours, but by the invention of artificial stones, termed by the Italians *smalti*, which can be made of every variety of tint. This art was never entirely lost. On the introduction of pictures into Christian temples, they were first made of mosaic; remaining specimens of these are rude, but profoundly interesting in a historical point of view. When art was restored in Italy, mosaic also was improved, but it attained its greatest perfection in the last and present century. Roman mosaic, as now practised, may be described as being the production of pictures by connecting together numerous minute pieces of coloured marble or artificial stones; these are attached to a ground of copper by means of a strong cement of gum mastic, and other materials, and are afterwards ground and polished as a stone would be to a perfectly level surface; by this art not only are ornaments made on a small scale, but pictures of the largest size are copied. In former times the largest cupolas of churches, and not unfrequently the entire walls, were encrusted with mosaic. The most remarkable modern works are the copies which have been executed of some of the most important works of the great masters for the altars in St Peter's. These are in every respect perfect imitations of the originals; and when the originals, in spite of every care, must change and perish, these mosaics will still convey to distant ages a perfect idea of the triumphs of art achieved in the fifteenth century. The government manufactory in Rome occupies the apartments in the Vatican which were used as offices of the Inquisition. No copies are now made, but cases of *smalti* are shown, containing, it is said, 18,000 different tints. Twenty years were employed in making one of the copies I have mentioned. The pieces of mosaic vary in size from an eighth to a sixteenth of an inch, and eleven men were employed for that time on each picture. A great improvement was introduced into the art in 1775 by the Signor Raffaelli, who thought of preparing the *smalti* in what may be termed fine threads. The pastes or *smalti* are manufactured at Venice in the shape of crayons, or like sticks of sealing-wax, and are afterwards drawn out by the workman at a blow-pipe, into the thickness he requires, often almost to a hair, and now seldom thicker than the finest grass stalk. For tables and large articles, of course, the pieces are thicker; but the beauty of the workmanship, the soft gradation of the tints, and the cost, depend upon the minuteness of the pieces, and the skill displayed by the artist. A ruin, a group of flowers or figures, will employ a good artist about two months when only two inches square, and a specimen of such a description costs from £5 to £20., according to the execution; a landscape, six inches by four, would require eighteen months, and would cost from forty to fifty pounds. This will strike you as no adequate remuneration.